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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 000755

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TAGS: [USUN](#) [PREL](#) [AU](#)
SUBJECT: UN AMBASSADOR RICE MEETING WITH AUSTRIAN
PRESIDENT, FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: VIENNA 691

Classified By: CDA John Ordway. Reasons: 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. UN Ambassador Susan Rice met separately with Austrian President Fischer and Foreign Minister Spindelegger on June 15. Charge accompanied Amb. Rice to both meetings. Fischer and Spindelegger were both joined by aides, as well as Austrian Ambassador to the UN Mayr-Harting.

Both meetings were largely keyed to UNSC business and reviewed a range of key international issues. End Summary.
¶2. (C) The Austrian side noted that they were preparing for their presidency of the UNSC in November. Rice said she appreciated the positive role Austria and Mayr-Harting were playing on the Council, especially in providing consistent leadership on human rights issues. Spindelegger noted that Austria was being stretched by its UNSC membership into areas, such as Africa, where it had little previous experience. This was good, he added, and expanding Austria's engagement with the broader world was one of their goals in seeking the seat. He also said that Austria hoped to maintain this engagement, in part by offering Vienna as a venue for quiet peacemaking and difficult negotiations, including those that needed a low public profile. Amb. Rice raised with both Fischer and Spindelegger the U.S. request for Austrian police participation in Afghanistan training mission; neither the President nor the Foreign Minister directly responded.

¶3. (C) Spindelegger, pointedly noting his scheduled trip to Moscow in early fall, asked about the prospects for a meeting with Secretary Clinton. A request was pending for a joint meeting with Austria's fellow co-chair of the CTBT Article XIV Conference. Amb. Rice said she would support the requested meeting with the Secretary, but suggested that a strictly bilateral meeting would offer a better opportunity to discuss UNSC priorities as Mayr-Harting and Spindelegger said they wanted.

¶4. (C) On substance, there were few points of disagreement in either meeting. Both Fischer and Spindelegger, however, provided a negative evaluation of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's June 14 speech seeing little new or positive. Amb. Rice said the U.S. saw his remarks as at least a step forward, particularly in accepting a two-state solution involving a sovereign, albeit demilitarized, Palestine. Her Austrian interlocutors acknowledged Netanyahu's new line on a Palestinian state. Fischer, however, noted that Netanyahu was very difficult to pin down and may not follow through on this commitment. Spindelegger, based on an EU Council meeting earlier in the day, said that they EU had expected more and that the Netanyahu speech was seen as insufficient.

¶5. (C) Fischer asked about North Korea, which Amb. Rice said

was a very grave concern. With a strong UNSCR adopted, the focus would now shift to implementation. She noted that China was frustrated and concerned by the DPRK fearful of how the regime would react to a too-tough course, but equally fearful of ROK or Japanese reactions to a weak response. Either could destabilize the situation in ways that would damage China,s interests. Rice added it was not entirely clear what is motivating the DPRK. If it were solely internal calculations, such as succession planning, the regime might be impervious to external pressures.

¶6. (C) Fischer asked Amb. Rice if the change to the Obama Administrations had Made it easier for Washington to do business with the EU. She responded &so far, so good but warned that difficult issues still lay ahead. Iran is one such issue, she said, where it is important for the U.S. and the EU to stay together. Spindelegger also mentioned Iran, saying that there was great concern within the EU about the issue. He noted reports of street violence earlier in the day, but said they had heard nothing yet from their Embassy in Tehran. Amb. Rice said that we would appreciate Austrian perspectives given the presence of their embassy. Charge noted that the role their Embassy plays in moving religious minorities to Vienna for refugee processing, and Amb. Rice added that we were very grateful for this.

¶7. (C) There was also discussion of:

- The Balkans, where Fischer saw continuing, albeit slow progress.
- Non-proliferation and disarmament, where both Fischer and Spindelegger noted the importance of U.S. accession to the CTBT and Spindelegger asked for Secretary Clinton to participate in the CTBT Article XIV Conference in New York in September.
- Georgia, where the Foreign Minister said Austria wants to play a fuller role in the Friends of Georgia.
- Africa, where IGAD is lobbying for sanctions on Eritrea and blocking arms flows to Somalia. Amb. Rice noted the Africans are not unified -- Libya is opposed -- and inconsistent, making the opposite case on Sudan. Asked about recent contacts with Uganda, Mayr-Harting said that they agreed on Eritrea and Somalia but also pointed to Libya,s contrarian position.
- Sanctions, where Mayr-Harting said Austria wants to build on its role as chair of the UNSCR 1267 sanctions committee to participate in reform of the listing and de-listing process.

¶8. (U) This cable was cleared by Amb. Rice.

ORDWAY